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Abstract

This study examined how the use of digital novels or "vooks" enhances the reading experience. Research was conducted at the household of one of the participants. The study included three elementary level males, and they were informally observed as they participated in reading the digital novel, *Skeleton Creek.* Data was collected through informal observations, interviews, anonymous questionnaires, and samples of student work. These findings showed that using digital novels when accessible, promotes student interaction, student participation, motivation, and an enhanced reading experience.

Introduction

As technology evolves, it begins to integrate in many different situations, including reading. Through evolving times, it is important to maintain a current status with the use of technology, and the various digital literacies has to offer. An example of a new concept is digital reading. Digital reading is a process in which technology is incorporated into traditional story book reading, allowing the reader to change focus from turning pages to watching a short film or logging into a website, precluding to the next chapter or book section. The focus has moved from paperback and hardcover books to electronic readers, creating an image that traditional storybooks are not as interesting as they were. Conducting research on maintaining the use of the traditional storybook while integrating the new era technology can enhance the reading experience for many readers who have access to the internet. The research conducted will analyze the experience digital reading has for the readers, and I will gain insight on how technology affects the reading experience for readers who have access to technology.

This topic is an important topic, in the technological advanced era, because it maintains the traditional reading experience with the text book, however provides a modern approach to the reading experience by incorporating technology. The use of technology in the classroom is demanding, and to keep traditional literacy while integrating new technologies may provide an exciting reading experience for readers who have access to the internet. The topic of digital reading is very important for children, because it provides the reader with a visual experience to coincide with the text read, and also opens another option to meet many diverse needs for the various learning styles in the classroom. Many students learn with different learning styles, such as, kinesthetic, visual and audio. Integrating digital reading with traditional books is a diverse

way to meet many children's learning needs, providing an equal opportunity for success in the classroom.

According to Galik & Kalas (2009), in their everyday lives, 12-18 year old students commonly take advantage of various services provided by the internet. Reading has always proved its importance in the classroom and at home, and as readers are distracted by technology, digital reading may provide the added excitement needed to ensure that picking up a book and reading is an enjoyable experience. While technology is evolving, educators should be literate on how to integrate appropriate technologies to enhance the reading experience, rather than take away the traditional reading process. The topic I have chosen of using digital literacies to enhance the reading experience is so important, because it is important to evolve as a teacher with the new literacies technology has to offer. It is important to incorporate new teaching and learning styles that many children find interesting to enhance the reading experience for those who have access to the internet, and according to Tarasiuk (2010), technology is interesting to children because it is new. Digital reading may provide many readers with the thrill of turning each page following a story line, while waiting to find the page with a website to login to. Digital reading might be the extra push children need for the motivation to read. While this might be more appealing to some children, the discussion these readers will have will entice the other students to inquire what the discussion is about, leading to curiosity and more motivated readers.

An example of using digital reading in the classroom is by using the reading series, Skeleton Creek, and Trackers, both written by Patrick Carmen. Throughout these series, the reader is led through a very interesting and suspenseful story, with pauses after several chapters with a link to a website on it, with a password. The reader is instructed to pause with reading the text and go on to the given website to watch a visual prelude to what is going to happen next, and

how the story is going to intensify. Taking the time for the reader to pause and use a different source to keep on task with reading can be very beneficial and increase the reading experience to an exciting level. The reader will have a sense of independence as they break away from the reading of the text to watch a video using a computer on what the story entails, watching and listening as the story turns to new events and new situations. The technology acts as a motivator to keep reading, while also giving a visual demonstration on the text that has just been read. As readers enter the chapter book reading stage, the use of images and illustrations also digresses, which leaves young readers a black and white page with words from top to bottom. Providing the students with an experience online with video and audio could not only enhance their reading experience, but create the images in their mind that they can carry with them throughout the rest of the story. Readers at this stage are still learning how to be creative thinkers and giving the students a creative visual of what could be taken from black and white text could create an interesting reading experience for all stories to come.

Without the action research done on this topic, the individuals who are getting hurt are the students; especially the student's who do not find reading interesting. When students struggle with the interesting aspect of reading, they choose to put themselves in other situations rather than read. The thrill of technology has lead to a descending amount of readers who appreciate reading and read during free time. Teachers must continue to grow with the changing era and technology, and enhance the reading experience using a process that student's find interesting and educators find beneficial. As of now, technology appears to be interesting to most students because it is something new and different, therefore exciting. Giving the students an opportunity to change the routine of reading to pausing and going online to lead on to the next section in a

story might improve literacy development and as a result, may potentially enhance the reading experience.

This study involved three secondary elementary students who were informally observed as they participated in reading and navigating through the website that connected with the digital novel *Skeleton Creek.* The participants were involved in informal observations, an anonymous questionnaire, and completed a task for student work that was collected. Through observation and research, the data collected was used to decipher the use of digital novels, and how they enhanced the reading experience. The study also involved a current elementary school teacher who had used the novel in her classroom with her students. This participant was involved with an interview conducted via email on her opinions and experiences with using the digital novel in her classroom, and the pros and cons it portrayed. My research suggests that using a digital novel in the classroom, when accessible, will enhance the reading experience, promoting more social interaction and motivation. The transition from print to the computer entices the readers to want to continue with the story to be able to find out what happens next via video. Using a digital novel, if accessible, maintains the traditional print based text reading method, yet enhances the reading experience with modern day technology. This provides the reader with the imagery the way the author wants it portrayed, providing a more clear understanding of what is happening within the text.

Theoretical Framework

According to Kucer (2009), the emerging field of digital literacies is rapidly expanding our understanding of both the nature of the text as well as text processing by drawing work from media education and information and library sciences. For this reason, literacy has evolved with

technology, and should be used to the advantage of all students' who have access to the internet, to enhance their reading experience. Goodman (2001) realized that it is important to remember that children's development of literacy grows out of their experiences, and the views and attitudes toward literacy that they encounter as they interact with social groups. This claim should support the use of digital reading in the classroom for the reason that not only should it enhance reading, it should improve social interaction between students, sharing a growing interest for traditional storybooks.

Throughout my research, I will use literacy and diversity theories to help me think about my research question. Socio-cultural theory is a theoretical framework that challenges traditional definitions of learning as the transmission of knowledge. From this perspective, leaning is defined as challenging participation in culturally valued activity with more expert others (Larson and Marsh, 2005). According to Larson & Marsh (2005), socio-cultural learning theory defines the child as an active member of a constantly changing community of learners in which knowledge constructs, and is constructed by larger cultural systems. According to Larson & Marsh (2005), the socio-cultural theory affords a comprehensive way to find new practices, specifically, some of the new practices associated with new technologies [digital literacy].

Along with socio-cultural theory, new technologies and literacy will be used. New technologies and literacy is a theoretical framework that draws on the work of multi-literacies, which attracted educators' attention to the way in which communicative moves were proliferating and changing due to the advances in technology (Larson and Marsh, 2005). According to Larson & Marsh (2005), there are three roles teachers need to adopt in order to facilitate new literacies; teachers as resource managers, which include providing children with a range of resources that can enable them to develop the skills; teachers as co-constructors of

knowledge, which transforms the role of the teacher, as students will know much, sometimes more; and teachers as design consultants, which states children need to be encouraged by teachers to make independent decisions.

 As students are going through traditional motions in reading, they will also understand the many ways technology can be integrated to enhance their reading, promoting a more exciting literacy discussion. Reading a book has appeared to lose interest in children, so integrating modern technology such as an internet website, and the traditional book, the reader has an interesting approach to chapter book reading.

Research Question

Given that literacy is a social practice; my research question is to determine: How does the use of "Skeleton Creek" enhance students' reading experience? I will focus on how it affects the reading experience, whether it was positive or negative.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to decipher how using technology in combination with reading can affect the reading experience. In attempting to understand literacy events, practices, and performances within a sociocultural perspective, there is often the tendency to focus on how "others" use literacy (Kucer, 2009). This claim will be important in the research due to dissecting the many opinions and looking into previous studies on how technology can enhance the reading experience. There are four themes that have been taken from the research that support the research question. The first theme is digital literacy, which involves a different logic and set of practices governed by multimodality (Rowsell & Burke, 2009). The next theme is multimodal literacy, which is defined as an understanding of different modes of communication (visual, acoustic, spatial) working together without one being dominant (Rowsell

& Burke, 2009). The third theme taken from the research is digital competence, which is the level of understanding that students have with new technologies, and the last theme is shifting the roles of teaching, which encourages students to make their own decisions to encourage confidence and independence. Throughout this literature review, it will be discussed how technology enhances the reading experience, and the effects it has on the participants.

Digital Literacy

As children of the new millennium, individuals are brought up in a technologically advanced era, learning that the use of technology can be integrated in any type of situation, whether it be learning or playing. When accessible, using technology in and out of school can be very beneficial to children when it comes to reading. If technology is accessible to students, digital literacy may be integrated into instruction, providing an enhanced experience to reading printed text.

O'Brien and Scharber (2008) define digital literacies to include the composition and reading of multimodal texts. Hagood (2011) also explains that in multimodal composing and reading, ideas and concepts are represented with print texts, visual texts, audio texts, and even dramatic or other artistic performances. The benefit of using digital literacies with students is that it maintains the regularity of traditional printed text, yet enhances the experience of reading by integrating the technological perspective of the new era. The key of digital literacies is not to take away from the reading experience, but add to it. Finding new ways to transition from reading printed text to observing visual and audio features will entice readers to read more of the text, knowing that the use of technology will be used throughout their selected reading.

An example of using digital literacies with traditional printed text is with the use of *Skeleton Creek*, written by Patrick Carmen. According to Groenke, Bell, Allen, and Maples

(2011), there is a new kind of young adult novel in town: the digi-novel or "vook," which combines traditional print-bound text with interactive online components. The idea of reading these types of literature is that rather than the reader turning from one page to the next, every 30-40 pages there is a link to a website that the reader enters through a search engine that leads them to a video that preludes the reader to the next section of the book (Groenke, Bell, Allen, Maples, 2011). When accessible, the reader has the opportunity to walk away from the text and use the computer to link what has happened in the story to what will happen next. The importance of using this for some readers is that it takes away from the struggle of imagery, which may lead to a higher level of comprehension. On the contrary, readers who enjoy creating characters in their mind without visuals taking away from the experience may choose to not watch the video and continue to read the traditional print. According to Groenke, Bell, Allen, and Maples (2011), one student who has read *Skeleton Creek,* commented, "If teachers used these kind of books when I was in kindergarten, I would be better at reading" (p. 38).

The draw of this type of text is with readers who are not instantly motivated by the look and feel of a traditional printed text; they need more to look forward to than the next page of words. Using digital literacies not only enhances the reading experience but will also motivate the reader; it will keep the interest level higher to where they would want to finish the text rather than replace it with a video game.

Technological innovation does not have to be looked down upon as a means of taking away from traditional printed text. It can be used in many ways to enhance the reading experience for students who have the internet easily accessible to them. According to Groenke and Maples (2010), using the digi-novel or video/book hybrid combines traditional print with online components, allowing the readers to engage with the story while still maintaining the use

of traditional text. According to Carmen (2009), he sees that kids are beginning to drift towards technology and away from books, and his books *Skeleton Creek*, is an attempt to ease the gap between technology and books.

Children whom are part of the technology era are generally interested in all uses of technology when it is made accessible to them. To hinder students from technology when it is offered throughout the school could continue to expand the gap between books and technology. When available, using digital technologies to enhance the reading experience will promote reading to all types of readers, including the less motivated readers. In many situations, technology is used as a reward system. When homework is finished, one may play their favorite video game, when one is finished with their chores, they may use the computer. Providing readers with a reward system throughout their reading experience will not only persuade students to continue reading, it will motivate the struggling and un-motivated reader to want to participate in the event (Henderson & Honan, 2008).

According to Black and Steinkuehler (2009), much of the criticism of adolescents' preferences for anything digital comes from long-standing fears and misunderstandings of technology and youth culture, as well as "a fear of what kids are reading and writing not whether they are engaged in such practices" (p. 271). When technology is integrated in reading, the importance is the students are actively engaged and become their own teachers, while enhancing discussion and new insights with other individuals. The teacher is responsible to leading the reading and discussion to create meaning and make it beneficial to the students; however, students who are actively engaged tend to gain more knowledge of the topic leading to an increase in understanding and participation.

Rowsell & Burke (2009) claim digital texts entered public debate and were acknowledged as capable of inviting skills that foster literacy. These findings are consistent with Alvermann, 2006; Buckingham, 2007; Cranny-Francis, 2005; Davies, 2006; Knobel and Lankshear, 2006; Thompson, 2008, that over the past few years, increasing attention has been paid to digital literacy practices, as well as to how they can be incorporated into literacy teaching and learning. As technology progresses, more attention will eventually be required to integrate in the school and/or classroom when accessible. As technology is developing and transitioning, the appeal to other students who have access to the technology, and those students tend to request the involvement and participation in using technology, when accessible. According to McNabb (2006), there are three ways in which the Internet can provide curricular benefits: (1) designing Internet-based activities to help meet the diverse needs of students by engaging them through personal interests; (2) customizing teaching-learning cycles in ways that motivate students; and (3) fostering self-directed learning. Many students enjoy having the opportunity to lead their own discussion whether it is amongst themselves or with peers. Giving students the role of leadership can be an effective way to reverse the roles of the classroom, providing a motivation tool increasing classroom participation and involvement in using digital literacies to enhance the reading experience.

Digital literacy involves more than the mere ability to use software or operate a digital device; it includes a large variety of complex cognitive, motor, sociological, and emotional skills, which users need in order to function effectively in digital environments (Eshet-Alkalai, 2004). The amount of positive outcomes that stem from the use of digital literacies may be what struggling or unmotivated students need in order to succeed. According to Mioduser & Nachmias (2002), the expansion of the Internet and other platforms of digital communication have opened

up new dimensions and opportunities for collaborative learning and information sharing in various forms, as learning communities, discussion groups, and chat rooms. In a technological advanced era, to provide students with the opportunity to enhance their reading and learning experience with the use of digital literacies may enhance their reading and learning experience, promoting more use of the digital novel or "vook."

According to Barone & Wright (2008), teachers may identify with past models of literacy that are paper and pencil bound; however, new conceptions involve continually changing views of reading and writing, particularly with the advent of the internet. Understanding that some schools are more technologically advanced than others, there are still many ways in which a teacher can incorporate technology in the classroom with limited materials. As it has been discussed, technology can assist student's learning needs by bringing a more exciting approach to literacy comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and reading. When using technology in classrooms, teachers should demonstrate how students should understand the purpose and use of technology, and adjust how one may use technology for pleasure and evolve the concept of how students should use digital literacies in the classroom for school-work. According to Barone & Wright (2008), new literacies extend the traditional experiences with comprehension of the information that is given to the student via internet. Students will discover new ways to develop comprehension and improve reading and writing skills by using the new technology.

According to Parsad & Jones (2005), in 2005, approximately 95% of K-12 classrooms in the United States had Internet access. Additionally, 80% of kindergarteners use computers and over 50% of children younger than 9 years old use the internet. As studies may claim that technology is beginning to become a large part in classroom instruction, many teachers find trouble in finding enough time in the day for students to use these technologies and develop their

skills at the computers. With the number of schools growing that are Internet accessible, the use of technology is becoming more demanding. The focus on integrating digital literacies into the classroom is not to use as a reward, however, it should be used to enhance the learning and reading experience. Using digital literacies in the classroom can motivate readers, and produce many student based discussions about a specific topic, creative an effective and interesting learning environment (Baron & Wright, 2008).

According to Edyburn (2007), we insist that the only way to read is by using the same visual, perceptual, and cognitive functions as everyone else, and the purpose of the study conducted was to outline categories that are fundamental to understanding the efficacy of technology for enhancing reading performance. Maintaining the traditional text with the new design of digital literacies may enhance and intrigue readers to want to continue on their own, creating an in and out of school reading experience.

In regards to the study conducted by Rowsell and Burke (2009), print based text is a traditional skill that has been around for years. As literacy evolves into the technological era of the millennium, traditional print based text loses its amusement and interest to technologically savvy readers. Providing readers with a digitally rich environment, when available, may lead to more success in the lessons that traditional text based reading may give, thus, increasing the validity and importance in using digital literacies to enhance the reading experience in the classroom.

Perceptions of what technology may entail might ruin the positive experience that it may bring to others when available. The importance of maintaining a positive use of technology is to provide students with meaningful uses of the source. Using digital literacies to enhance the

reading experience while also motivating readers to continue with traditional print based text

could be a positive change in the traditional classroom environment (Rowsell & Burke, 2009).

Multimodal Literacy

The use of digital literacy builds upon the use of multimodal literacy, in which Unsworth

& Chan (2009) argue that the increasingly prominent role of images in combination with

language in the vast majority of texts students encounter has prompted widespread advocacy of

the need to redefine literacy and literacy pedagogy. As technology evolves, many teachers and

classrooms are taking on the role of integrating technology. Technology is important to integrate

into classrooms when accessible, because of its creative and interesting qualities that it has to

offer individuals. A form of technology that may assist in digital literacies is multimodal literacy.

According to Luke & Freebody (1999), and Street (2003), multimodal literacies includes the

definition of literacy as inclusive of multiple modes of communication, dependent on social

context, and inextricably linked with issues of ideology and power.

As times are changing with new technologies, teachers must understand how to evolve

with the new generation, creating meaningful methods to enhance the reading experience, rather

than take away from it. According to Goodman (2003), it is suggested that a critical inquiry

approach to media production can afford students the opportunity to develop literacy and critical

thinking skills across several disciplines, including science, history and language arts. One of the

positive outcomes multimodal literacy offers is that the student is in charge, leading their own

discussions and asking questions, forgetting they are learning.

Technology has unfortunately taken away the desire to read traditional print based text,

due to the excitement of new games, new media, and new ways to use technology from

computers to cell phones and video games. A way to enhance reading while drawing children

back to the traditional print is to integrate multimodal literacies into the classroom when

available, giving an opportunity for the children to use more than one source to read and

understand the text, using technology to add to the reading experience , rather than take away

from it. Allowing students to use technology to coincide with reading traditional text, it gives

them a sense of motivation and independence to be on their own, exploring using skills they

learned with computers. Not only is technology expected to connect one text source to another,

teachers are being urged to include new literacies using digital media to make connections

between the learning spaces of home and school (Mills, 2010). Conducting studies with the new

digital age technology may lead to argumentation of the availability of technology within lower

income schools and homes. In contrast, according to Mills (2010), the National Center for

Education Statistics reported that more children and adolescents use computers and the Internet

at school at 81%, and 65% of children and adolescents use computers and the Internet at home.

With these numbers growing as much as they have been in the past decade, it is wise for

educators to begin using effective methods of multimodal literacies, to connect home and school,

leading to more development. New experiences tend to increase motivation and raise the interest

level and student adapt well to new experiences because it tends to take away from the

repetitiveness of traditional learning in the classroom.

Technology can have many benefits to motivate students and keep them interested in

reading and writing. In a study conducted by Whitin (2009), she found that multiple sign systems

are valuable and needed elements of literacy instruction, and the use of digital technologies can

help build the literacy skill and benefit the students. The use of digital literacies can be used as a

way to enhance what the students have read, not replace the traditional print based text. An

example of this given by Whitin (2007) shows that teachers can show the students how to create

a digital movie which gives the students endless possibilities in what they can do with technology and projects. Technology gives students a chance to expand on their own with what they read or write, and gives them the freedom to enhance their own learning in the form that they prefer. Some students still may choose the written text, but it could be very beneficial to the classroom to give the students an opportunity to choose, when the resources are available.

Growing up in a digital era, the importance of technology may be argued that multimedia presentations are powerful tools for improving learning in all subjects because they enable the simultaneous display of multiple complementary representations of information. The students are taken away from the traditional print-based text reading, and are able to use technology to enhance their reading experience with the information they gather from the text, and apply it to the information they are gathering using multimodal literacies. As technology advances, individuals expect more out of learning. According to Unsworth & Chan (2009), because images are being used increasingly in a complementary role to words in representing the meanings central to a text, it is no longer adequate to consider reading simple as processing information in print. Teachers must learn to enhance the reading experience, using forms of multimodal literacies, such as digital novels or "vooks."

Digital Competence

As digital and multimodal literacies prove their importance in enhancing the reading experience, teachers need to create an environment appropriate for understanding the purpose and proper execution of the skills required in using technology. As a foundation, it may be beneficial to guide students to understand their role in the use of technology, to enhance the experience while eliminating confusion, resulting in responsive outcomes.

Within the use of new digital literacies and multimodal literacies, the issue arises with the digital divide of students who have the Internet accessible to them and those who do not, and also the educators whom are familiar and comfortable with using technology, and those who are not. When a new concept is introduced, many tend to shy away in fear that they will not understand it, or want to take the time to learn about it. According to Krumsvik (2008), when it comes to teachers' digital literacy, there is a need to develop a more pedagogic-didactic content for digital literacy in order to deal with the way in which new digital trends influence the underlying conditions for schools, pedagogy, and subjects. This claim states that, when available, technology should not be integrated to enhance lessons unless the educator understands what it has to offer classrooms, and how to effectively use it to enhance a lesson, rather than take away from it or replace it.

According to Drotner (2001), in studying digital competence outside the formal institutions of learning, digital competence among young people is out of direct relevance to discussions about learning in schools, and it seriously confronts earlier conceptions of literacy and learning. This statement is consistent with Livingstone (2002), as it claims the active exploration in these new media environments from our wide-ranging study of young people, is that media both shape and are shaped by the meanings and practices of young people's everyday lives.

According to Erstad (2006), one problem is that teachers do not use available computers much in their own teaching. Rather than using the computers in the classroom for teaching purposes, they are only used to create and prepare lesson plans. The use of the term "digital divide," which is defined by Henderson & Honan (2008) as the "gap" between those who have technological access and those who do not. This term tends to be used often when the topic of

digital and multimodal literacies is discussed; however, many individuals misinterpret where the divide actually lies. Some researchers assume that the digital divide is within students, between those who have access to the Internet and those who do not. However, the divide is actually between the rich literate practices used by young people in their homes and the narrow and restricted practices engaged in by school and teachers (Henderson and Honan, 2008). When teachers avoid using technology in the classroom when it is made available, that produces the same digital divide as students who have access and those who do not. According to Henderson & Honan (2008), there is some evidence that teachers in low socioeconomic schools often underestimate the access of students to computers and the Internet. It is often assumed that low socioeconomic families and schools are not Internet accessible, when in fact, some are. Growing in a digital era, students come to school more technology literate with the use of technology at home, or at another residence. In many classrooms, there are many times where traditional print based books are used as a reward system, for example when work is finished, the student may read a book. In this age, playing on the computer is used as a reward system when a student is finished with school work (Henderson & Honan, 2008). When teachers become more familiar with digital and multimodal literacies and close the digital divide, students may be able to "play" while still doing an activity that is beneficial to their learning while also enhancing their experience.

Galik & Kalas (2009) explored ways in which digital and multimodal literacies are beneficial to students, and they thoroughly developed and explored the possibilities of using the Internet in the educational process in more effective and attractive ways. To motivate the teachers whom are uncomfortable using technology, or who could benefit from taking an information class on effective ways to use technology to enhance reading instruction, providing

feedback on the effects of the use of technology is important. Educators need proof in the effectiveness of technology in the classroom, and if it is available in the classroom or within the school, it should be used in a variety of ways. Galik & Kalas (2009) suggest, tying in technology with the book series *Sherlock Holmes* leads to motivated students who are intrigued to work collaboratively while also reading the full text to understand the use of technology and what it has to offer. When students work collaboratively and lead their own discussions, most students are going to want to stay on task with reading so they can engage in the activities and understand the purpose of the use of technology. Using websites to enhance the reading development provide motivation while also evolving into the digital media age, suggesting the importance of using digital novels in the classroom.

Shifting the Role of Teaching

Educators supporting the use of digital and multimodal literacies, and encouraging digital competence are left with the responsibility to becoming the receptor of information as the role of teaching is shifted. As children growing up in a digital era, they appear to have a greater understanding of technologies, whether it is on the Internet, using a cell phone, or playing a video game. Throughout each day, students are listening to what is being taught to them, being given the option to speak only when the hand is raised and they are called upon. In this changing and developing world, perhaps the repetitiveness and the traditional day in the classroom could be refurbished, to enhance the learning process by switching the role of teaching.

Giving students the opportunity to use digital technologies develops a sense of independence in them while using these resources. According to Miller (2007), over the past two decades, technological and cultural contexts have produced a shift in the notion of literacy from the conventional sense of reading and writing only print text to an enlarged sense of reading and

writing multiple forms of non-print texts. These findings are consistent with Alvermann, (2002); Lankshear & Knobel, (2003), who claim that within youth born after 1981, reality includes new literacies embedded in these new technologies. When youth of this age are developing in a technologically advanced world, they become familiar with the use of technology and the many forms of it. According to Meneses & Momino (2010), 89.4% of students overall know how to use a search engine, and 84.7% of students overall know how to use a form of chat. Knowing this, integrating technology into the classroom while stepping back to let the students lead the discussion is possible, and could potentially have successful outcomes.

According to Tarasiuk (2010), schools should expand their notions of literacy instruction and treat it as reading and writing for the purposes of communicating in many traditional and contemporary modes using multiple tools and resources. If the schools and/or classrooms have access to the Internet, the educators should understand the beneficial forms of the technology and integrate it into the classroom. According to Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu (2008), in 2005, the availability of technology in schools reached an all time high, with 99% of K-12 schools connected to the internet. With this information, the importance of integrating technology in the classroom is expanding, and using technology to enhance lessons while providing meaning and instruction can be the motivator and successor that the classroom needs to foster technological development.

Given the knowledge that youth are more technologically advanced than expected, the role of the teacher may be changed throughout some lessons. According to Lankshear & Knobel (2003), to integrate new beliefs about knowledge and literacies into classrooms, teacher educators need to take seriously the notion of teachers first, and provide new teachers with opportunities to learn new multi-modal literacies for their own authentic purposes with support

from their ongoing needs before they can effectively use then as student learning tools in the classroom. The roles switch when the teacher becomes the student, in order to understand the effective uses of technology that can be offered in the classroom before administering the task. Once the educator informs the classroom of what will be expected of them, the roles will switch as the teacher becomes an observer as the students take on the role of the teacher, leading in class discussions and ideas for new topics. When others have a question about the form of technology, other students may be willing to explain what to do, leaving the teacher for support and guidance, rather than teaching, allowing the students to investigate digital novels on their own, drawing on their own conclusions of the text.

Throughout the research, many claims have been made on the effects of digital and multimodal literacy, and how it impacts and enhances the reading experience. By providing students with the opportunity to evolve in the technology era, if accessible, the students gain independence and enhance their social interaction as well as participation. Schools and teachers can participate in diminishing the digital divide by promoting the use of digital novels and multimodal literacies in the schools and classrooms when accessible. Teachers must work together to maintain an interesting and enticing reading experience for students by integrating a concept that many students who have the access find interesting, technology. As teachers evolve into technology savvy individuals, there is a greater outcome in enhancing the reading experience for the individuals who have technology available to them.

Methods

Context

Research for this study will be conducted in one of the participant's, Zachary's home, and this study will be done using action research to provide feedback to my research question. Zachary (a pseudonym) lives in a suburb of upstate NY in a house with his father, step-mother, brother, step-sister, and step-brother. The suburb in which they reside is made up of a population of 41,000; 92.9% white, 2.8% Asian, and 1.7% black males and females. 94.4% of students attend high school or higher, and 51.1% receive their bachelors degree or higher. The median household income is approximately $67,000. Timothy (a pseudonym) lives in the neighborhood with his mother and father and brother, and David (pseudonym) also lives in the neighborhood with his mother, father, and sister. I will also conduct an e-mail interview with a current 4th grade teacher in the same school district as the participants. Julie (pseudonym) is a 24 year old white female. She is a 2nd year teacher in the western, NY suburban school district and is certified in special education and general education K-6. All participants live in a middle class neighborhood, located in western, NY. The neighborhood is a friendly environment with many children the same age as the participants. The neighborhood is in a safe, quiet location, walking distance from one of the elementary schools in which they attend in western, NY.

Participants

Zachary is 11 years old and is a Caucasian male. He is a very busy child as he participates in various sports throughout the year. During his free time, Zachary likes to read, and his favorite genre of books is mystery and fiction. Zachary spends the majority of his time at his father's house, as his mother lives in a different town in which he does not like visiting. The majority of his friends are located in the same suburb of western, NY, and his father is very involved in everything he does. Timothy is also 11 years old and is a Caucasian male. Timothy enjoys similar interests in sports, as him and Zachary play lacrosse together on the same team.

Timothy enjoys being active and is very involved throughout the community in sports and clubs. Timothy's family is very active in his life, as they attend most sporting events and are very enthusiastic in his educational development. Lastly, David is 11 years old and is a Caucasian male. Like the others, David is very involved in sports, and plays on the same lacrosse and hockey team as Zachery. All three participants are in general education classrooms are about to transition to the middle school grades 6-9 in western, NY.

The 3 participants are involved in many sports, lacrosse and hockey taking up the majority of their free time. They have similar interests in reading, as they all enjoy the mystery and adventure genre, and enjoy science fiction stories as well. When Zachary has free time, he enjoys reading in his bedroom because it is a quiet environment in which he can focus and no one bothers him. Timothy and David share the interest in doing extra homework during free time rather than read; however, they are focused and involved when they are being read to by another individual. When the participants are reading, they share the same difficulty with imagery and creating images in their mind as they are reading. They enjoy reading books with pictures or that have movies with the same story line, because it puts the image in their head for them rather than them creating the image on their own.

Researcher Stance

As a researcher, I was a participant observer who worked in group sessions with the three participants listed above. Currently, I am a graduate student at St. John Fisher College, in my last semester. At the end of August, I will have my master's degree in Literacy birth to 6th grade. Currently, I hold my bachelor's degree in Elementary Education- and am a New York State certified teacher from grades 1st to 6th.

I have known all 4 of the participants previous to the research study, and I am also friends of their families. Throughout this study, I conducted my research as a participant observer, for the reason that I am a genuine participant in the activity being studied. Mills (2007) defines the participant observer as experiencing teaching through observation, as well as engagement in activities and providing information. Following this researcher stance will allow my questions to be answered to conduct my study on how digital reading enhances the traditional reading experience.

Research Method

During this study, I participated in a qualitative study in various ways with the three participants- Zachary, Timothy and David. As part of a grade wide project in their elementary school, all three participants have read the book *Skeleton Creek* written by Patrick Carmen. The study was conducted by using various methods of action research, including experiencing, enquiring, and examination.

Through experiencing, I conducted my research as an action researcher in observing the students navigation skills through the website developed by the author of Skeleton Creek. I took field notes on their participation, discussion, and execution of internet skills as they roamed through the website. I also took notes on conversations and interactions with each other, and their visible enthusiasm when given the opportunity to explore on their own throughout the internet.

Through enquiring, I conducted more research on interviewing as a whole group, and then in an individual, anonymous questionnaire. The questions asked were based on opinions and open ended questions. The validity of my research solely relied on the anonymous questionnaires given, as they were able to be completely honest and answer the questions in their own opinion,

as I asked open ended questions. The participants were able to answer the questions as they see

fit, ensuring accurate and honest feedback. Also, I enquired through an email interview with one

of the fourth grade classroom teachers in the same school district as the participants. The

feedback from the interview via email was based on opinion and personal experience of using

the digital novel in her classroom. The teacher will have finished a year of using the book

Skeleton Creek in her classroom, so her feedback will be accurate and the questions are open

ended to ensure validity.

Through examination, the participants created journal entries, using the same tone as the

main character in the book, and using a familiar area in their neighborhood which is the town

park. They wrote journal entries for duration of 24 hours, on a situation that happened at the

park. Their task was to follow the same tone, and make the writing realistic to make the reader

feel as if he or she is involved in the situation, much like Patrick Carmen does in Skeleton Creek.

Quality and Credibility of Research

Research that will be conduced within this study will ensure privacy, credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Mills (2007) defines credibility as the

researcher's ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study to

deal with patterns that are not easily explained. To ensure that credibility will be present during

this study, I will use three participants, all who have read the story. I will use transferability,

collecting detailed, descriptive data, by gathering data from different participants, and combining

the information after the study to develop statements in which the participants made, without the

interference of my opinion (Mills, 2007). The questions that will be used for student response are

open ended questions that have no lead to a specific response. This research method will ensure

that the students are not lead in a certain direction as they are asked to answer the question.

I will also use dependability in my study, in which I will use more than one method to conduct this study in such a way that the weakness of one is compensated by the strength of another (Mills, 2007). This research strategy will be present in my study as I will have a written and a hands on form of data collection, as the participants will take the role of the teacher and I will remain as an observer. Doing so will ensure that if one participant struggles with one form of research, they will not be misunderstood as the other form of research will compensate their weakness.

Lastly, confirmability, the neutrality or objectivity of the data that has been collected, will be present in my study, as I will maintain the practice of triangulation throughout my study, which is a variety of data sources and different methods are compared with another to cross check data (Mills, 2007). The importance of using confirmability is to ensure that no bias opinions will alter the research gathered in the study. The participants will be asked open ended questions to ensure that the responses will be entirely opinion based, rather than biased.

In doing so, I will also practice triangulation, which according to Mills (2007), is generally accepted in action research circles that researchers should not rely on any single source of data, interview, observation, or instrument. I will use triangulation in my study by offering four methods of data collection: informal observation as an active participant, an e-mail interview with a current teacher whom has read *Skeleton Creek* with her class, anonymous student questionnaires, and an example of each of the participant's student work relating to the topic.

To document all observations and discussions, I will maintain an audio recording of all interactions I will have with the participants to ensure quality and accuracy. Also, I will keep a

journal with written notes of observations made that the audio will not detect, to ensure the quality of data collected in the study.

Informed Consent and Protecting the Right of the Participants

Before beginning my research process, I will collect informed assent from the students and informed consent from their parents for the purpose that they are minors. I will also gather written consent from the teacher that is participating in the study. As they are old enough to understand, I will ask the participants to give me their written assent, allowing myself to conduct a study using their opinions. I will give their parents/guardians a consent form for them to fill out as well, giving their permission to use their child as a participant in my study. I will respect the information that will be returned to me and maintain a comfortable, safe environment to work with. I will provide the participants with the purpose for the study I am conducting, and I will ensure privacy by using pseudonyms and keeping their identity private. Due to working with minors and their personal opinions, I will not underestimate the importance of confidentiality and respect, to ensure a safe and open environment for the participants to work in.

Data Collection

As previously stated, there will be multiple forms of data to be collected by the participants. I will perform a privileged observation in which I will let the participants take the role of the teacher, as I observe the way they cooperate, their enthusiasm, their level of respect, and their discussions they have with each other. I will observe using audio recording and field notes to ensure quality and accuracy. I will also use two forms of enquiring: interviewing and questionnaires. For the interview process, I will conduct an interview via email with the previous fifth grade teacher of one of the participants. I will collect data based on their personal experience and opinion. As for the participants, I will conduct an anonymous questionnaire

based strictly on opinion, using open ended questions to allow various responses rather than target where the feedback should lead. Lastly, I will use examination with artifacts of student work that will be observed and examined. Using multiple forms of data collection will maintain the use of triangulation and ensure validity and credibility.

Findings and Discussion

Through the multiple forms of data collected during the research process, three themes emerged to support the research question, how does using digital novels or "vooks" enhance the reading experience? Through observation, questionnaires, an interview, and student samples, I have discovered that the consistent themes were the following: (1) Student interaction, (2) Motivation, and (3) Enhancing student performance.

Student Interaction

The first important theme taken from the research in my study was the level of student interaction that the digital novel or "vook" brought to the classroom. This theme was apparent through my informal observation and field notes collected during this research study. The student interactions was obvious, as the students navigated easily through the website and were excited to type the URL address into the search engine to reach the webpage associated with *Skeleton Creek*. According to my observation, the students discussed what they thought the video was going to be about in correspondence with what they had read in the previous chapter, and what they expected to see. Through observation, it was clear that the students discussed the events in the story with each other, and made "bets" on what the video was going to be about while waiting patiently for the webpage to load to find out if they were right. With the interesting technology integration, the students were unknowingly part of their own interactive book club. The significance of these findings to the research study is the communication between the

readers. The digital novels promotes interaction which in turn enhances the reading experience by providing different opinions and insights on how the book is seen and the perceptions on what will happen in the story next. The interaction and involvement with the students who read the book are able to expand their knowledge and be introduced to new opinions and insights from other students.

As the video was playing, the students appeared to watch the videos with concentration and amusement, as if they had never seen anything like these videos before. As the three participants were watching the video, they were positioned very closely to the computer screen disregarding their chairs as they were so amused with what was happening on the screen. The participants were chatting throughout the entire video with guesses on what was going to happen next, while some were exclaiming that this was "the scary part." As the book went on, it began to be a competitive race as to who could type the password in the website the fastest to get to the video, as they all ran and gathered around that computer to watch. The students pointed out after the video what page certain points of the video were referring to, and opened the text to show the other participants in the study. This observation was another form of social interaction throughout the study as they discussed their points of view within the text, and were reassured or corrected as the video played, whether their interpretations were correct or incorrect.

Although the students were actively engaged during the digital section of the novel, the students were also engaged during classroom time when reading the text. For the reason that the use of technology is an exciting element to use in the classroom, especially with reading, the students appeared to be engaged with the text so they could be a part of the discussion. The participants explained that it was important to follow along with the book because if they did not, the videos would "ruin" what would happen next. This observation was an interesting point to

identify during their conversation because the participants did not want the video to ruin the

story, meaning they wanted to make sure they were reading before watching the video, not

relying primarily on the video. According to the interview conducted between a current teacher

and me, when asked the question: How does integrating technology with reading affect the

classroom participation with reading, the teacher responded with,

> "Integrating technology increases the motivation of students and therefore their
>
> participation increases as well. Incorporating sensory pieces such as visual, auditory, and
>
> kinesthetic, on the SmartBoard is always helpful in any subject area. It is difficult to
>
> incorporate with reading, however the *Skeleton Creek* series changed the way my
>
> students viewed read aloud" (personal interview, July 22, 2011).

Another form of student interaction that the digital novel produced was within the

classroom, beyond the teacher's direction. Through the interview with the teacher, she explained

in response to the question: How did *Skeleton Creek* change the reading experience in the

classroom, that, "I began reading *Skeleton Creek* in September. After viewing the first few

videos on my own I sent home a letter to the parents describing the book and the content of the

videos. I did not show the first two videos because my students were still young. As I continued

reading the book, I noticed the boys in my class began a "Comic Book Club"(personal interview,

July 11, 2011). The content of these comic books were heavily based on *Skeleton Creek.* The

students were eager to continue the story and always asked, "How many pages until the next

video?" I always found out that they went home and found the videos on their own. Also, the

popular names that the students would use in their realistic fiction stories were the ones from the

book" (personal interview, July 11, 2011). The significance to this response is to determine the

motivation level of the students in the class when the digital novel is involved. The students are

more interacted and involved with *Skeleton Creek,* providing an opportunity to discuss different points of view while also participating in discussions.

The students appeared to take it upon themselves to create ways to view the videos in the story and find other students in the classroom that had the same reading interests as they did. The student's interaction within the book and with their "clubs" that they formed was based on the experience they got from the book and the videos on the website. According to the teacher interview, the students were more actively engaged during and after reading *Skeleton Creek* than they were before, as they showed minimal interest in reading. The importance to this finding is to provide an understanding on how the involvement with the students increases during book discussions. Mioduser & Nachmias (2002) claim the expansion of the Internet and other platforms of digital communication have opened up new dimensions and opportunities for collaborative learning and information sharing in various forms, as learning communities, discussion groups, and chat rooms. The discussions explained in the classrooms of the participant provide detail that using digital novels promotes more social interaction.

Motivation

Using a digital novel or "vook" may have positive and negative outcomes based on the maturity level of the students involved. A positive theme that appeared to be evident throughout my research was increased motivation. According to an interview conducted with a current teacher, when being asked the question: How do your students in the classroom feel about reading, the teacher responded with, "The feeling of my students varies considerable. Typically the girls enjoy reading more than the boys. The boys in general prefer Math. Also, the genre of the reading material varies as well. Some prefer biographies, while others prefer poetry" (personal interview, July 11, 2011). As previously stated, the teacher discussed how the boys in

her classroom formed a comic book club in regards to the story *Skeleton Creek* that was being read in the classroom. This motivation was due to the experience they had with reading the new digital novel. As the boys in her classroom started out the school year with little interest in reading, their views were changed quickly when the digital novel was introduced. As Goodman (2003) states, it is suggested that a critical inquiry approach to media production can afford students the opportunity to develop literacy and critical thinking skills across several disciplines, including science, history and language arts. Digital novels transition the student to be in charge, leading their own discussions and asking questions, forgetting they are learning.

Another form of motivation that *Skeleton Creek* appeared to bring was within the classroom and book discussions. The digital experience assisted with comprehension putting images to the text that was read, the students generally understood it more because they were able to match a face to a name. According to the anonymous student questionnaire, based on their experience with *Skeleton Creek*, the students explained that it was not confusing to transition from the text to technology. There was a general consensus with the responses as the participants enjoyed the transition because it put a picture in their head for them, so they did not have to think of it themselves. This could be good or bad, for the reason as it helps some students who need assistance on what to take from the imagery of the text, the other students could rely too much on the images being displayed for them. One of their main issues with reading is that there are no pictures, so it is sometimes difficult to understand the text. When there are videos to watch with the text, anything that they were confused about was answered by the end of the video, and the participants were able to enter the next chapter with a clear understanding with what was happening within the text. In previous experience, when students are able to

understand what is happening within a text, there is more participation and motivation to continue reading because they understand.

Another form of motivation the book appeared to bring was the obvious, technology integration. As Henderson & Honan (2008) explained, technology is a new developing experience for many who have access to it, and because it is new, more individuals are generally interested in it. Based on this finding, more students are motivated to want to participate when there is something new involved, like technology. As the experience was a whole class experience, many students were motivated to follow along and read the text so they were able to understand what was happening within the videos. Some students appeared to evolve into a competitive stance to see who could read the fastest to be able to watch the video first. Through informal observation, one of the participants boasted to the other participants that he was done reading the first chapter first so he was able to watch the video before anyone else. The thrill of being able to transition from text to technology appeared to be new and exciting to the participants, providing a more positive outcome due to motivation and desire than other experiences with texts in the past.

Enhancing Student Performance

As the digital novel or "vook" has appeared to be a starter for student interaction, and a tool for motivation in the classroom, it also assists as a tool to enhance student performance by assisting with comprehension. Through observation, it became evident that many students struggled with comprehension within a text, especially when they were older and were reading chapter books with little to no pictures. As comprehension becomes an issue, the student interaction and participation decreases in the classroom as a lack of confidence and no clear understanding of the text. As Alvermann, (2006); Buckingham, (2007); Cranny-Francis, (2005);

Davies, (2006); Knobel and Lankshear, (2006); Thompson, (2008) state that over the past few years, increasing attention has been paid to digital literacy practices, as well as to how they can be incorporated into literacy teaching and learning. Providing students with extra assistance with comprehension could improve their literacy skills and be used as a beneficial teaching tool. According to the anonymous questionnaire given to the three participants, the students generally struggled with imagery within reading, which is putting a picture in their mind as to what is happening, what the characters look like, and what is happening within the text. The videos at the end of the chapter provide the experience for these students whom are struggling and put the image in their head the way it is supposed to be comprehended by the author. The significance to this finding is consistent with a claim made by Goodman (2001), whom realized that it is important to remember that children's development of literacy grows out of their experiences, and the views and attitudes toward literacy that they encounter as they interact with social groups. This claim should support the use of digital reading in the classroom for the reason that not only should it enhance reading, it should improve social interaction between students, sharing a growing interest for traditional storybooks.

According to the anonymous questionnaire, the question: What was your opinion of the transition from the text to video throughout the book, a participant responded with, "I liked it because the videos showed you what happened and the journal [online] gave more details about it (informal observation, July 22, 2011). The student explained through informal observation that sometimes it is difficult to understand what is happening when there are no pictures to look at in the text. The videos at the end of the chapters provides the students with a summary of what they had read, while transitioning them to the next chapter with a visual cue on what to expect, and

what the scenery looks like. Having the images in the participants minds appeared to make the remainder of the text easier to comprehend (personal interview, July 22, 2011).

Another conclusion that the digital novel experience can assist with comprehension was in response to the question: When you transitioned from the text to the video, did it distract you or help you understand more, the participant responded with, "It helped me understand more because there were more details (anonymous questionnaire, July 22, 2011). The students used the video experience as a way to allow for understanding and resolve any unanswered questions they had within the text, providing them with a clear idea of what to think and expect before beginning the next section of the story. The significance to this finding is in relation to student development and performance. The digital novel provided the participant with the imagery to help understand the text, while also being lead on to what will happen next in the story.

The themes and findings gathered from the informal observations, interviews and questionnaires appeared to prove the digital novel's importance as a useful tool in the classroom and out of the classroom. The level of motivation and student engagement as well with assisting with comprehension provides the teacher and students with a useful resource that the students will benefit from and become a more engaged student. The participants in the research study showed how using *Skeleton Creek* enhances the reading experience and shows its potential to become a useful tool in and out of the classroom when it is accessible.

Implications

Based on the findings within my research study, there were a few important implications that would benefit teachers. The first implication is that through informal observation, the students appeared to navigate through the computer and the website with ease, so it proved to be a useful tool rather than something that would be too difficult and distract them more. As

questions have arisen on the effectiveness of technology in the classroom and if students can navigate through websites, the participants showed great knowledge in navigating through the website and typing in the URL address. The students were able to locate the web page without being distracted with other features that the website offers, which kept them on task. Although not all students in the classroom were observed, these students showed that they could assist others who have difficulty navigating through the internet website. Also, the teacher could save the address as a bookmark within the internet page, and show the students as a whole class how to locate the bookmarks and what link to click on. Providing the students with a saved internet address could eliminate the confusion for some students who may not be knowledgeable with the internet and locating web pages. There are many ways in which navigating through the website can be simplified to meet all students' needs.

The next implication that arose from the research conducted from the study is the usefulness in student activities using the videos and book. The extension activities involving the story seemed to expand as the students had more ideas to write about, as they were introduced to another genre of literature. An example of this is the teacher can assign the students with an assignment of realistic fiction, like *Skeleton Creek,* and introduce a writing assignment with the same language and imagery as the author, Patrick Carmen, uses. Throughout my research, the students were assigned a writing piece to write one day about another topic, using the same language and imagery as Patrick Carmen. The students used the topic of a town park that was located near their neighborhood, and wrote about an incident that happens there after dark. They appeared to be easily motivated with the topic and were motivated to write just like the author of *Skeleton Creek*, and were eager to share their stories with their peers. The participants were eager to read their short stories aloud and display them for others to see. The motivation aspect of

using a digital novel with writing increased the quality and the time spent to complete a writing piece. Another useful way to extend an assignment based on the experience with using *Skeleton Creek* is to allow the students to make their own videos in the classroom, if the technology is accessible, on another book they have read. If the technology is not accessible, the students could write a script and act it out in front of the class as a group. Whether technology is accessible or not, the students would be able to expand their knowledge of the style of writing and as a result, participate in an activity that also works on writing development. With the motivation and student interaction that the digital novel expressed, the students may be eager to participate in creating their own for their peers to see.

The last implication with using the digital novel introduces the idea to not rely solely on reading aloud to the students, and have the students be engaged somehow with reading the text. Due to budget and accessibility with the books, it may be difficult for students to have a copy of the text. If available, renting copies of the text from the public library may be an option to involve more students with following along with the text, dividing them into individual groups to read to each other. Also, if accessible, showing the text on a projector screen so the students can follow along may be a good alternative, or giving the students a chance to read aloud. The reason for this implication is from my informal observation, it became evident that the students began to rely too much on the teacher reading the story to them, and some students were not getting a positive literacy experience throughout the text. For the reason the participants knew they were being read to, they did not focus on the literacy elements and relied solely on the teacher reading each page and using prompts to promote discussion. Transitioning the read aloud to student involvement could allow the book to be more beneficial to the students reading rather than using it for "story time." If the students had more responsibility with reading the text, there might be a

more positive outcome on reading the text rather than listening to it for the reason they could be working on comprehension elements and story structure rather than wait for the next video. Using the book in this way may offer more extended learning opportunities for the students to benefit from.

The implications of my research and findings leave me asking myself how students can be involved more during the reading process using digital novels or "vooks." I suggest that this study be further examined more and to study how teachers can find an alternative way for students to be more involved with reading, not just watching the videos. I suggest that teachers, if accessible, involve more students with the reading process using a projector screen or providing multiple copies from the book using the school or public library. Involving the students with more responsibility may alter the participants perspective on how they enjoyed the book, for they will have to put forth effort in reading rather than relying on someone else to read it to them. The purpose for this is within my study, the participants showed a liking to the concept of the teacher reading a chapter to the students each week. The students perception on how they like the book could be altered by the reason being they did not have to read it themselves. Providing the students with more responsibility and further researching this study could result in more understanding on how the digital novels or "vooks" enhance the reading experience.

After conducting my research, I am left with several questions regarding the outcome of the study. After discussion with the participants; what can teachers to do involve the students more in reading the text to provide a literature rich experience? As research has shown, there is a high interest level with digital novels and the participants, so how can teachers provide a more beneficial experience with reading *Skeleton Creek?* Lastly, I find myself wondering if book

circles throughout the day be a better situation with providing students with a book for themselves or to share, and come together at the end of the week and discuss out loud what they have read and what they think will happen next as they watch the video online as a class. Doing so may promote more reading rather than the "story time" feel that teachers give the students as they read a book aloud.

Conclusion

Throughout my study and the findings from the participants, the use of the digital novel or "vook" appeared to be beneficial in the classroom, and the participants were capable of navigating through the technology to build on social interaction, motivation, and were able to get a positive literacy experience from it. The participant's ability to interact with each other, while also extending their knowledge through peer discussion groups that were formed on their own, provided each student with a visual, auditory, and kinesthetic experience to reading, meeting the needs of all learning styles in the classroom. Based on the findings within the study, the digital novel proves its importance as a useful tool in the classroom to promote social interaction, motivation, and as a learning tool that students can use to develop their literacy skills. The outcome of the digital novel meets the New York State English Language Arts standards: (1) Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding, (2) Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression, and (4) Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction (The New York State Education Department, 2011). The digital novel may be used to enhance the reading experience, while also providing the teacher with an exciting tool to increase student involvement and interaction. Not only does *Skeleton Creek* provide a modern use of technology, it maintains the traditional print based text while introducing a new style of reading that may appeal to most readers.

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